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## *CARDINAL DOLAN: STATEMENT ON THE 43RD ANNIVERSARY OF ROE V. WADE*

**January 14, 2016**

What a wrenching thing it is each year. Just last month we celebrated the birth of the baby Jesus, fruit of Mary's humble "yes" to God's gift of new life. This month we celebrated the arrival of the Wise Men to greet the newborn King, who "appeared and the soul felt its worth." Then we observe the birthday of a great preacher whose basic message was the dignity of the human person and the sacredness of all human life. And then we turn, as we must each year, to recall a legal decision that said "no" to new life, has led so many women and others involved in abortion to grieve their loss and doubt their own worth, and has deprived a whole class of people -- pre-born babies -- of their right to life.

Such an anniversary cannot be celebrated. But it does offer an opportunity to take stock -- to ask where we are, forty-three years after the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* decisions, and where we need to go.

We live in an increasingly divided nation, where people of different views as well as different races, religions, and national origins often seem to lack the patience and good will to respect each other and try to live in harmony. Abortion itself, despite the endorsement of our highest legal tribunal and many political and cultural elites, is as controversial as ever. Most Americans oppose a policy allowing legal abortion for virtually any reason -- though many still do not realize that this is what the Supreme Court gave us. Most want to protect unborn children at later stages of pregnancy, to regulate or limit the practice of abortion, and to stop the use of taxpayer dollars for the destruction of unborn children. Yet many who support important goals of the pro-life movement do not identify as "pro-life," a fact which should lead us to examine how we present our pro-life vision to others.

Even as Americans remain troubled by abortion, a powerful and well-financed lobby increasingly insists that there is no real issue here -- that abortion is just another part of "basic health care" for women, to be seamlessly integrated into our health system and our lives. Planned Parenthood and other abortion promoters say they will no longer call themselves "pro-choice," apparently realizing that this phrase might allow others to choose a path different from their own. They hold that abortion must be celebrated as a positive good for women and society, and those who cannot in conscience provide it are to be condemned for practicing substandard medicine and waging a "war on women."

We see this in the rising opposition of some political leaders to the very notion of a right of conscience on abortion. A few years ago, for example, President Obama pledged to defend the conscience rights of those who do not accept abortion, and his Administration assured us that longstanding federal laws protecting these rights must be fully enforced. Yet in the final days of 2015, he and other Democratic leaders were unwilling to support the Abortion Non-Discrimination Act, a modest measure to provide for effective enforcement of these laws.

While this is disturbing, it is also an opportunity. The great majority of Americans are not committed to this extreme ideology. They do not see the unborn child as an illness or a tumor. They are repelled when they see the callousness of the abortion industry, as in the recent undercover videos of Planned Parenthood officials calmly discussing the harvesting of body parts. They do not want to be pushed into actively promoting and paying for abortion. They do not want doctors and nurses who are sensitive to the value of life at its most vulnerable to be driven from the healing professions. They are open to hearing a message of reverence for life.

In taking up this challenge, we who present the pro-life message must always strive to be better messengers. A cause that teaches the inexpressibly great value of each and every human being cannot show disdain or disrespect for any fellow human being. We should celebrate human freedom, always reminding others that this freedom is ours so we can freely choose the good -- and that to enjoy this freedom, each of us must first of all be allowed to live. And especially in this Year of Mercy, we recall with Pope Francis that each human life is created by a God whose love is infinite -- and that this same love is a source of unbounded mercy and forgiveness for all who have fallen short of God's plans for us. For its part, through the healing ministry of Project Rachel, the Catholic Church seeks to offer this gift of God's mercy and reconciliation to all who have been involved in abortion.

I invite all who are concerned about the tragedy of abortion to recommit themselves to this vision of life and love, a vision that excludes no one. Finally, let us never be distracted by the false charge that this life-affirming cause is merely a political or partisan issue. It is an essential moral vision that lifts up every human person. With Pope Francis let us remember that "this defense of unborn life is closely linked to the defense of each and every other human right.... It is not 'progressive' to try to resolve problems by eliminating a human life" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, nos. 213-4). Genuine progress must be progress for all, beginning with those most vulnerable who cannot speak for themselves. May God bless our efforts to uphold human life!

## Prayer to End Abortion

Lord God, I thank you today for the gift of my life,  
And for the lives of all my brothers and sisters.

I know there is nothing that  
destroys more life than abortion,  
Yet I rejoice that you have conquered death  
by the Resurrection of Your Son.

I am ready to do my part in ending abortion.  
Today I commit myself  
Never to be silent,  
Never to be passive,  
Never to be forgetful of the unborn.

I commit myself to be active in the  
pro-life movement,  
And never to stop defending life  
Until all my brothers and sisters are protected,  
And our nation once again becomes  
A nation with liberty and justice  
Not just for some, but for all.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen!

- ◆ Founded by Abby Johnson, herself a former Planned Parenthood health center director, ***And There Were None*** (ATTWN) is a registered nonprofit organization that provides financial, legal, spiritual and emotional support to all those who would like to leave the abortion industry. ATTWN that is pro-life without exceptions, and while they believe in and wholeheartedly support all peaceful prolife efforts, ATTWN seeks to end abortion from the inside out. *For more information, visit [abortionworker.com](http://abortionworker.com)*
- ◆ ***Rachel's Vineyard***, a ministry of Priests for Life, offers weekend retreats for post-abortion healing for married couples, mothers, fathers, grandparents and siblings of aborted children, as well as persons who have been involved in the abortion industry. Retreats are offered throughout the year in locations across the United States and Canada, with additional sites around the world. *For more information please visit [rachelsvineyard.org](http://rachelsvineyard.org)*

## Pray to End Abortion in Indiana

(each month will highlight a different abortion provider in the state)



**Dr. Casandra Cashman** is a family practitioner with Community Health Network. She performs abortions at the Georgetown Health Center - Planned Parenthood.

She appears to be passionate about women's health care, but is unfortunately misguided in her efforts.

- ◆ Pray that she will recognize that abortions destroy human life
- ◆ Pray that she will realize that abortions do not help her patients, but hurt them
- ◆ Pray that her passion for women's health will be used to affirm the value of life rather than end human life

Our Lady of Guadalupe, pray for us!

